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Citizens Union Releases Recommendations to Improve NYC Districting Commission's Updated Maps and Increase Transparency

Recommends Publicly Releasing Written Rationales for Each District to Make Commission's Decision-Making More Transparent

Concerns include Protection of Incumbents, Underrepresentation of Asian Americans, and Division of East Harlem

Citizens Union today released its [recommendations to the New York City Districting Commission expressing the good government watchdog group's strong concerns over the Commission's need for transparency](#), and its consideration and protection of incumbents, which could result in the underrepresentation and division of Asian American communities in lower Manhattan, Bensonhurst and Bayside. Citizens Union also voiced its concerns about the continued division of East Harlem through District 8, and the underrepresentation of Manhattan, through the addition of a portion of the Bronx into the district.

In addition to recommendations regarding individual districts, Citizens Union recommended that the Commission provide formal, written rationales for the drawing of each district prior to any vote on final maps. This information will ensure that the public has full information about the Commission's decision-making, and may increase public confidence in the final maps.

The [letter from Citizens Union executive director Dick Dadey and policy and research manager Rachael Fauss, includes a detailed demographic analysis of the proposed maps](#). It also expresses concern that District 19 does not include all of Bayside and Oakland Gardens, despite the overwhelming sentiment of the public that these neighborhoods be fully included in the district. Citizens Union also notes that the South Asian community in East New York and Cypress Hill is divided between Districts 37 and 42, and that District 1 and 2 have remained


largely the same under the revised maps despite recommendations from the public to join Chinatown and the Lower East Side.

"The Commission has fallen short by not putting the public interest ahead of protecting incumbents, particularly when it comes to addressing the representation of Asian Americans in New York City," said Dick Dadey. "Faced with a lack of public information about the Commission's decisions to draw districts the way they did, New Yorkers are scratching their heads and are left to wonder why the commission made certain decisions and not others. The commission needs to explain why it included some public suggestions into their maps, but not others," Dick Dadey said.

"The Commission has the opportunity to provide needed transparency by releasing publicly written rationales detailing the decisions they have made for each district," said Rachael Fauss. "Transparency of the Commission's decision making is essential to ensuring that the public has more confidence in the districting process."

Citizens Union is expected to testify at upcoming hearings by the Districting Commission, including the hearing to be held this evening, 6:30 p.m. at Hunter College Auditorium, 695 Park Avenue.

[Citizens Union's letter to the NYC Districting Commission.](#)



[Citizens Union](#) is a nonpartisan good government group dedicated to making democracy work for all New Yorkers. Citizens Union serves as a civic watchdog, combating corruption and fighting for political reform. We work to ensure fair and open elections, honest and efficient government, and a civically-engaged public.

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